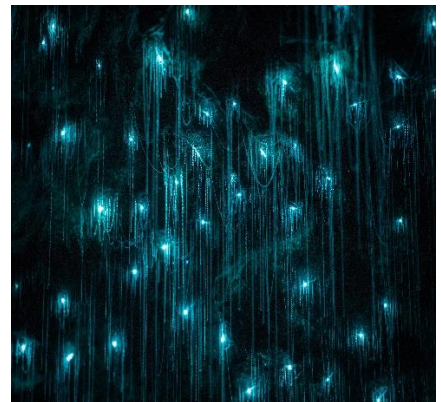


TOGETHER WE TRAVEL!



# solo connections



~ New Zealand North Experience ~



## NEW ZEALAND NORTH EXPERIENCE

14 Days

Fully Hosted

22 November – 05 December 2024

### ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Auckland Sightseeing including Devonport
- Bay of Islands
- Waitomo Caves
- Middle-earth experience at Hobbiton
- Rotorua Hot Springs
- Volcanic Hills Winery
- Tamaki Maori Village
- Taupo & Huka Falls
- Napier & Hawkes Bay Wineries
- Cape Kidnappers Gannet Colony 4WD experience
- Wellington Sightseeing
- Zealandia & the Karori Sanctuary

### INCLUDES:

- Return Economy “The Works” Class Airfares with Air New Zealand from Brisbane/Sydney or Melbourne
- **Private Single Room** in quality accommodations
- Meals as per the itinerary 13 Breakfasts/ 1 Lunches/ 12 Dinners
- Sightseeing Tours and Airport Transfers as per itinerary
- **Tour Host** – travels with group from/to Brisbane
- Local Driver/Guide

### EXCLUDES:

- Domestic Flights
- Any meals, tours, excursions or transfers other than mentioned above or in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature i.e. laundry, drinks, phone calls, tipping etc
- Travel Insurance

**Priced from \$9,479\* per person**

Terms and Conditions apply. Price is per person Sole Use and subject to availability. Price is correct as at 30 January 2023. Tour requires minimum number of passengers to depart. Air taxes to the value of \$240 included. Airfares cannot be removed from tour package. Solo Connections is constantly striving to improve our itineraries and inclusions. If such improvements can be made, or unforeseen circumstances beyond our control make changes necessary, we reserve the right at any time to vary itineraries and to substitute inclusions of equal value. Further booking conditions apply, please check all prices, availability and other information with your travel agent at time of or before booking. Package cancellation fees apply. Denise Marie Falsay trading as Solo Connections. ATAS Accredited A11424. ABN 92 582 582 996

~ New Zealand North Experience ~



Day 1 – Friday 22 November 2024  
Arrive Auckland

D

This morning we will meet our Tour Host and fellow travellers at Brisbane International Airport for our flights to Auckland.

Passengers arriving from other cities will meet the group in the arrivals hall of Auckland International Airport.

**Kia Ora! Welcome to New Zealand.**

On arrival at Auckland Airport we will be met by our coach driver/guide and transferred to our hotel to check in.

The remainder of the day is at leisure and this evening we make our way to a local restaurant for a welcome dinner.

**Accommodation: Sudima Hotel Auckland City or similar (1 Night)**

Day 2 – Saturday 23 November 2024  
Auckland – Bay of Islands

B-D

This morning after breakfast we check out, board the coach and travel north across Auckland Harbour Bridge and the North Shore.

We pass some of the lovely beaches along the Hibiscus Coast and continue north through picturesque farmlands to Paihia in the beautiful Bay of Islands.

On arrival to the Bay of Islands we'll proceed to the **Waitangi Treaty house** and meet our guide at the top gate for a guided tour. It was here on 6 February 1840 that Māori and British settlers signed an historic agreement which gave birth to the nation of New Zealand. Our guide will offer a perspective on past and present relations between Māori and European and will highlight the unique place that the Waitangi Treaty Grounds has within the history of New Zealand.

The tour includes an **introduction to Waitangi, visits to the War Canoe – the world's largest, Meeting House, the Treaty House, and the famous Flagpole.** The Meeting House is a superb example of the skills of Māori wood carvers and flax weavers. Take time to wander through the beautiful grounds of the Waitangi estate, complete with extensive gardens, bush tracks, beaches, and fabulous views over the Bay of Islands and beyond and **visit the interactive Museum of Waitangi.**

Once we arrive at the hotel, we'll check in and have time to refresh before coming together to enjoy a buffet dinner in the hotel restaurant this evening.

**Accommodation: Kingsgate Hotel Pahia or similar (2 Nights)**



Day 3 – Sunday 24 November 2024  
Bay of Islands

B-D

Enjoy breakfast this morning before we are transferred to board a luxury catamaran for a **4.5 hour morning cruise to Cape Brett** - enjoy a cruise out into the Bay meandering around the idyllic beaches of the islands that make this area so popular.

Pass the Cape Brett Lighthouse and farther out see beautiful Motukokako Island and the famous **Hole in the Rock**. Hold your breath as the skipper skilfully navigates his way through the hole and into Grand Cathedral Cave (*sea conditions permitting*).

On the return to Paihia we pass several remote islands, fringed with golden sand beaches.

Our afternoon is at leisure. There is the option for you to stop at Russell and catch the ferry back to Paihia – *at own expense*.

This evening, we'll meet and go out for dinner at a local restaurant on the waterfront.

Day 4 – Monday 25 November 2024  
Bay of Islands – Auckland

B-L

This morning we check out after breakfast and drive south back to Auckland via Whangarei.

On arrival into Auckland, we will **enjoy lunch at a local restaurant**.

This afternoon, we take a **sightseeing tour of Auckland** known as the 'City of Sails' for the large number of yachts and sailboats that use the beautiful waters of Auckland Harbour and the stunning Hauraki Gulf. Highlights include the panoramic city and Harbour views from Bastion Point; trendy Parnell Village; the lovely bays of the waterfront drive and the vibrant Viaduct Harbour area.

This remainder of the day will be at leisure. Your tour host will be on hand for anyone that would like company or assistance on where to go for dinner.

**Accommodation: Sudima Hotel Auckland City or similar (1 night)**



Day 5 – Tuesday 26 November 2024  
Auckland - Cambridge

B-D

After breakfast we check out, board the coach and travel south through the southern suburbs of Auckland then over the Bombay Hills and through the lush Waikato Valley, famous for its highly productive dairy industry, and on to **Waitomo**. The Waitomo region is renowned for its distinctive limestone landscape and underground cave systems.

We join a **guided tour of the famous Waitomo Caves** to discover an ancient underground labyrinth of limestone caves and grottos. See the fascinating limestone formations of stalagmites, stalactites and columns that have formed over thousands of years then enjoy a silent boat ride on an underground river into the starry wonderland of the magnificent **Glow-worm Grotto**. *Please Note: you will be entering an underground caving system. Please speak to your guides prior to commencing the trip if you experience claustrophobia.*

From Waitomo we travel to **Cambridge**, known as the Equine Capital of New Zealand. Upon arrival we will have time to check in and freshen up before we meet for dinner in the hotel this evening.

**Accommodation: Hidden Lake Hotel, Cambridge or similar (1 Night)**

Day 6 – Wednesday 27 November 2024  
Cambridge – Hobbiton - Rotorua

B-D

This morning after breakfast we travel to Matamata, home to the real Middle-earth with a **visit to the Hobbiton Movie Set**, the bucolic setting for The Shire that featured in the Peter Jackson directed films, The Lord of the Rings.

Our tour starts with a drive by coach and guide travelling through the picturesque 1,250 acre sheep farm with spectacular views across to the **Kaimai Ranges**. Our guide will escort us, walking through the ten acre site recounting fascinating details of how the Hobbiton set was created. The Hobbit holes, Green Dragon Inn, Mill and other structures created for The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films can be viewed and you will see how this beautiful piece of Waikato farmland was transformed into The Shire from Middle-earth. Upon completion of our tour we will get to enjoy a complimentary beverage in the Green Dragon Inn then return to The Shires Rest.

We continue over the bush-clad Mamaku Ranges to the thermal wonderland of Rotorua. Upon arrival we take a **guided tour of Te Puia** which combines a premier Maori culture experience with an introduction to the magnificent geothermal activity in the Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley. Whilst in the valley we'll see the boiling mud pools, steaming silica terraces, hot springs and geysers including the famous **Pohutu Geyser** which can erupt up to 30 metres high, depending on its mood.

A visit the **New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute** is next, where young Maori are learning the traditional carving and weaving skills of their ancestors. Further highlights of our tour will include **Rotowhio Marae** and **Te Aronui a Rua**, the sacred meeting house of **Rotowhio Marae**.

Late afternoon we check in to our hotel for the next two nights before freshening up and then meeting for dinner in the hotel.

**Accommodation: Distinction Rotorua or similar (2 Nights)**



Day 7 – Thursday 28 November 2024  
Rotorua

B-D

Enjoy breakfast this morning before we **visit the National Kiwi Hatchery**. The Kiwi, New Zealand's national icon, is an endangered species and The National Kiwi Hatchery Aotearoa is a world leader in kiwi husbandry, egg incubation systems, hatching techniques and kiwi chick rearing. Our visit here will showcase how Kiwi recovery programs are playing their part to bring this treasured icon back from the brink of extinction on the New Zealand mainland. During our 45-minute guided visit, we learn all about the Kiwi bird at the world's most successful kiwi hatchery and discover how more than 2100 kiwi chicks have been hatched here. Gain an understanding of what it takes to hatch a chick and see genuine 'Conservation in Action' in the purpose built incubation facility and if we're very lucky, perhaps see a newly hatched kiwi chick!

We'll then jump onboard an eight-seater Gondola cabin and experience spectacular views of Lake Rotorua, the city and steaming geothermal vistas. The 900-metre long Doppelmayr cableway system will transport us on a gentle, scenic ride up to the Skyline Rotorua complex.

At the top we get to enjoy a **wine tasting at Volcanic Hills Winery** whilst we soak up the magnificent view overlooking Rotorua town and lake.

After time for lunch (*own expense*), we travel out to the **Redwood Forest**. Here we find the award-winning eco-tourism **Treewalk** which is 700 metres long, spans across 28 suspension bridges, 27 platforms and takes about 40 minutes to complete. With the height of the walkway ranging between 9-20 metres, we will have a unique, birds' eye perspective of the forest and treetops below.

This evening **visit Tamaki Maori Village for a Cultural Experience and Hangi Dinner**. We enter the replica pre-European Maori village and witness the earth being scraped carefully away from the hangi pit and proceed into their ancestral Meeting House to relax as their family entertain us with a powerful cultural performance before dining on the traditional hangi buffet dinner (Maori feast) cooked the Maori way, in an earth oven.

We will be transferred to back to the hotel later this evening.

Day 8 – Friday 29 November 2024  
Rotorua - Taupo

B-D

This morning after breakfast we **visit the thermal area of Waiotapu**, one of the world's most colourful thermal areas.

See the Artist's Palette where different minerals form on the pool surface, view the tiny bubbles surfacing in the Champagne Pool and walk down alongside the silica terrace to see the Bridal Veil Falls as well as other thermal activity. The Lady Knox Geyser also plays at 10:15am daily (with a little help from her friends).

We continue through Kaingaroa Forest plantation to the resort town of **Taupo** on the shores of New Zealand's largest lake and world-renowned trout fishery. Upon arrival we'll check into our rooms and have the remainder of the day is at leisure until it's time to meet for dinner.

**Accommodation: Millennium Hotel, Taupo or similar (2 Nights)**



Day 9 – Saturday 30 November 2024  
Taupo

B-D

This morning we enjoy breakfast before travelling out to the Huka Falls where we will marvel in wonder at nearly a quarter of a million litres of water per second erupting from a natural gorge and thundering 11m into the Waikato River below.

We stop for a visit to **Lava Glass**. A kaleidoscope of colours greets visitors to the Lava Glass sculpture garden. Opened in early-2014, the garden features more than 600 glass sculptures handcrafted by master glass artist Lynden Over and his glassblowing team.

This afternoon we take a leisurely **cruise on Lake Taupo to the Maori Rock Carvings**. The rock alcove at Mine Bay became the canvas for one of the most extraordinary contemporary carvings New Zealand has ever seen.

Returning to the hotel, relax and freshen up before we leave for this evening's dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 10 – Sunday 01 December 2024  
Taupo - Napier

B-D

Depart Taupo after breakfast we travel across the Rangitaiki Plains to **Hawke's Bay**, and the seaside city of **Napier**.

Napier was devastated by an earthquake in 1931 and was rebuilt during the period when Art Deco Architecture was fashionable. The area is also one of New Zealand's top grape growing regions with some of the country's best-known wines coming from the Hawke's Bay.

We'll check into our hotel and have the remainder of the day is at leisure. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.

**Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Te Pania or similar (2 Nights)**

Day 11 – Monday 02 December 2024  
Napier

B-D

Following breakfast today travel to **Te Awanga** to visit Cape Kidnappers Gannet Colony. Captivating champion divers and masters of the sea, brace yourself for a journey that takes us from coast to cape, to the world's largest most accessible Gannet colony in beautiful Hawke's Bay. This **4WD safari experience** takes us on a guided discovery tour to the top of **Cape Kidnappers Gannet Colony** where we will encounter over 20,000 gannets in their natural habitat—nesting, preening, dancing swooping and diving right before our eyes.

Stopping for **wine tasting at a local winery we will also enjoy a platter** to accompany our wine. We return to our hotel and have the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

Our journey has brought us to the North Island's wine country, so this evening's **dinner is at the Mission Estate Winery**. Mission Estate Winery established in 1851 by pioneering French Missionaries is New Zealand's oldest winery and the birthplace of New Zealand wine. Enjoy dinner in the restored seminary buildings that are Mission Estate Winery and offer sweeping views of Napier.

~ New Zealand North Experience ~



Day 12 – Tuesday 03 December 2024  
Napier - Wellington

B-D

This morning we check out and travel through vineyards and orchards, through the bush-clad ranges of the Wairarapa and into **Wellington**. Full of artists, writers and film-makers – the most famous of whom is Sir Peter Jackson – Wellington has a lively arts scene and café culture.

On arrival into Wellington we drive past New Zealand's magnificent Parliament Buildings and the iconic 'Beehive', the Executive Wing of the New Zealand Government. From the Kelburn lookout take the **Wellington Cable Car** down into the central business and shopping precinct and then walk the short distance to our hotel.

We will check in, freshen up and then meet for dinner in the hotel.

**Accommodation: Novotel Hotel, Wellington or similar (2 Nights)**

Day 13 – Wednesday 04 December 2024  
Wellington

B-D

Enjoy breakfast this morning before our **visit to Te Papa** – one of the most exciting museums in the world, featuring New Zealand insights – the shaping of its land, the spirit of its diverse peoples, its unique wildlife, landscapes and its distinctive popular culture.

Later we **visit Zealandia and the Karori Sanctuary**. With over 225 hectares of regenerating native forest and 40 species of birds, Zealandia is a unique, world-first eco-attraction, providing an excellent opportunity to experience New Zealand's natural environment just minutes from the capital city.

The afternoon is at our leisure for some last minute shopping, before we come together for a **farewell dinner** at a local restaurant.

Day 14 – Thursday 05 December 2024  
Depart Wellington

B

Sadly our time in New Zealand's north has come to an end. A final breakfast together and then with our bags packed, we say our goodbyes and transfer to the airport for our flights home.